

August 5, 2022

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
National Climate Advisor
White House Office of Domestic Climate Policy
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Michael Regan
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Ms. McCarthy, Administrator Regan and Secretary Buttigieg:

As national and state faith organizations across the country representing a wide spectrum of religious traditions, we are united in our pursuit of environmental justice and care of our common home. Through our faiths, we hold fast to common moral values that prioritize protecting vulnerable populations, defending our children's health, caring for God's creation, and fulfilling our obligations to future generations. It is through these values that we are empowered to act against pollution and climate change.

On the anniversary of President Biden's executive order setting ambitious but necessary targets for clean cars, we urge the Biden Administration to act swiftly on the executive order and fulfill its obligations to set longer term light-duty vehicle (LDV) standards for model years 2027 and beyond. We are running out of time for such remedies to bring positive change and ask that you set these standards as soon as possible. This action will make a significant positive impact toward the urgent goal to cut emissions 60 percent by 2030, and will put American cars and light-duty trucks on a clear path towards 100 percent zero emission vehicle sales by 2035. Robust clean car standards will help combat climate change and address clean air.

Because transportation is the largest contributor to climate change in the U.S., reducing tailpipe emissions will not only protect families from vehicle pollution, save drivers money at the pump, but will significantly help combat climate change. Given inaction in Congress and the rising stakes of climate inaction, particularly for vulnerable populations, it is imperative that we act to swiftly reduce vehicle emissions.

Vehicle pollution is not an equal burden. Because of historic and systemic racism, low-wealth communities and communities of color are often located closest to highways and experience disproportionate harm from dirty vehicle pollution, leading to increased rates of asthma and other respiratory illnesses. Reducing tailpipe emissions would not only address climate change, which is felt first and worst in communities of color, but significantly reduce pollution in black, brown, and Asian-American and Pacific Islander neighborhoods. Clean air should be a right, not a privilege, in America.

Strong clean car standards are pivotal for improving air quality and saving lives in communities afflicted with the dirtiest air in the nation. These standards are also essential to achieving emission reductions needed to avoid the worst consequences of climate change and its impacts.

A just climate and pollution response demands that we move towards clean transportation. Enacting clean car standards that prioritize zero-emission vehicles will help ensure a more just future for communities of color and help protect all of God's creation and all people on Earth.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Baptists

Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life

Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action

National Religious Partnership for the Environment

Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association

SHAMAYIM: Jewish Animal Advocacy

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team

Union for Reform Judaism

United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries

The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society

Uri L'Tzedek